



Specialty Crop Block Grant applications available

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has announced the availability of Specialty Crop Block Grant applications. Past recipients have supported research, offered trainings, improved production and increased marketing for the state's diverse agricultural industry.

Specialty Crop Block Grants fund projects that enhance the competitiveness of Wisconsin's specialty crops as a whole. Specialty crops include fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, nursery crops and floriculture.

Priorities for 2014 Specialty Crop Block Grant funds include:

- Environmental sustainability, pest and disease control and varietal improvement.
- Development of food safety practices including "Good Agricultural Practices," Good Handling Practices" and "Good Manufacturing Practices."
- Increasing the demand for and supply of locally-produced foods in Wisconsin.
- Industry innovation in production, processing and packaging.
- Education to increase the consumption of Wisconsin specialty crops.

Non-profit organizations, producer organizations, universities and local, tribal and state government entities are encouraged to apply. Specialty Crop Block Grant applications can be submitted by a single entity or a collaborative effort. Applicants may submit more than one application for multiple projects.

Applications must be received at DATCP by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, March 31. DATCP is accepting applications in anticipation of receiving federal funding.

Projects will be awarded grants between \$10,000 and \$100,000 and be for up to three years in duration. Eligible expenses for grant activities include, but are not limited to: personnel services, consultant services, subcontractors, materials, supplies and other miscellaneous costs. Applicants must provide at least 25% of the total requested funds as a matching contribution.

Applications that build upon a previously funded Specialty Crop Block Grant are welcomed. Multi-state projects are also eligible to address problems that cross state boundaries.

Projects will be reviewed through a competitive process and submitted as one Wisconsin state plan to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for final approval. It is expected that project work could begin in late fall.

A grant writing workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, February 26 from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. at DATCP, 2811 Agriculture Drive, Madison. Potential applicants are encouraged to participate. Attendees will receive step-by-step assistance with the grant application, suggestions for writing strong proposals and feedback on project proposal ideas. To attend this workshop or request assistance in another area of the state, contact Juli Speck at 608-224-5134 or juli.speck@wisconsin.gov.

Find application materials at http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Crops_and_Specialty_Crops. A comprehensive list of eligible specialty crops is available at www.ams.usda.gov/scbgrp.

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